

Utah State Department of Health, Division of Health Systems Improvement
Bureau of Licensing August 2001

Let's Talk: Medication Administration for Assisted Living Facilities

With the revisions to the Assisted Living Facility rules, effective April 1, 2001, there have been many questions about medication administration [R432-270-19]. The **MEDICATION ADMINISTRATION GRID** (reverse side) has been designed by the Health Facility Licensing Staff to help answer questions. We have also included frequently asked questions below. Please call Bureau of Licensing staff for further clarification as needed:

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- "I have filled my mother's mediset since she was admitted to the Assisted Living Facility. The facility staff has given the medications. It saves a lot of money. Is it necessary for a pharmacy to dispense medications in individually packaged doses now?"***

No, it is not necessary for a pharmacy to dispense medication in individually packaged doses. If it is permitted by the facility's Medication Administration policy, you may continue to fill your mother's mediset. (Refer to: Medication Set-Up on *The Medication Grid*.) This needs to be documented on your mother's Resident Assessment and her Service Plan.
- As an Administrator of an Assisted Living Facility, can I allow family to bring in medications?***

Yes. A family member may bring in medication, if this is permitted by your facility policy. The facility staff documents which family member is responsible for medications on the Resident Assessment and the Service Plan.
- Can the consulting RN for the Assisted Living Facility set-up meds from the pharmacy bottles?***

Yes, if this is the facility policy. Some facilities may require the use of a pharmacy packaging service due to the number of residents, or may charge extra, for the time it takes to set-up medication.
- "I'm an RN. My Dad is in an Assisted Living resident. Can I fill a unit dose container and let the staff give the medication?"***

Yes. If permitted by facility policy, you may fill a unit dose container and the facility RN may delegate medication administration, in writing, to trained facility staff, in accordance with the Nurse Practice Act. The Facility RN must provide and document the supervision, evaluation, and training of staff, who assist with medication administration. The level of medication assistance needs to be documented in the Resident Assessment and the Service Plan.
- "Do non-prescription drugs, like Advil, need to be dispensed in packets by a pharmacist?"***

No. Over-the-counter (OTC) medications do not need to be dispensed by a pharmacist. If permitted by facility policy, a family member may bring over-the-counter medications to the facility. This needs to be documented in the Resident Assessment and the Service Plan.

The bottom line in Medication Administration is the "five rights."

- Right Resident
- Right Medication
- Right Time
- Right Dose
- Right Route

MEDICATION ADMINISTRATION GRID for ASSISTED LIVING FACILITIES

August 2001

*The Resident Assessment (conducted prior to admission, every six months, and with a change in resident's condition) identifies the type of medication assistance needed.

TYPE OF MEDICATION ASSISTANCE*	MEDICATION SET-UP	WHO GIVES MEDICATION	MEDICATION ADMINISTRATION RECORD
<p><u>NO ASSISTANCE: SELF-ADMINISTER</u></p> <p>Resident is able to take medications without prompting or assistance from facility staff</p> <p>Reference: Med Administration 270-19 (2)(a)</p>	<p>Family member /designated responsible person per facility policy (Ex. RN evaluates ability of family member/designated responsible person to set-up meds correctly, and monitors pm)</p> <p><u>or</u></p> <p>Licensed Practitioner sets up medication,</p> <p><u>or</u></p> <p>Pharmacist dispenses medications in packaged doses,</p> <p><u>or</u></p> <p>Physician provides sample medication from manufacturer. Medication set-up is per facility policy.</p> <p>R432-270-19 (2)(a) & (2) (b) do not direct who is responsible to set-up medications.</p>	<p>Resident without assistance from the Facility Staff</p> <p>Trained Facility Staff remind resident to take medications and may open medication container</p> <p>Reference: 270-19(2) (b)</p>	<p>Not Required</p> <p>Required</p> <p>Trained Facility Staff document medication administration</p> <p>Reference: 270-19(4)</p>
<p><u>PARTIAL ASSISTANCE: SELF DIRECT</u></p> <p>Resident recognizes medication by color or shape, and questions differences in the usual routine of medications.</p> <p>References: Definition 270-3(2)(f) Med Administration 270-19(2) (b)</p>	<p><u>FAMILY MEMBER OR DESIGNATED RESPONSIBLE PERSON</u></p> <p>Administer medications from a package set up by a licensed practitioner or licensed pharmacist which identifies the medication and time to administer.</p> <p>Reference: Med Admin 270-19(2)(c)</p>	<p>If a family member or designated responsible person assists with medication administration, they shall sign a waiver.</p> <p>Med Admin 270-19(2)(c)</p>	<p>Required</p> <p>The person giving the medication documents</p> <p>References: 270-19(4) Med Adm 270-19(2)(c)</p>
<p><u>SIGNIFICANT ASSISTANCE</u></p> <p>The resident does not recognize medications or does not know when to take medications.</p> <p>Regardless of the type of medication assistance options, medication errors occur more often when multiple medication systems are used.</p> <p>(Example of multiple systems. Medications are administered from more than one of the following: med box, pharmacy labeled bottles, bulk mail order, bubble pack, auto med spool packets, sample medications from a physician, or over-the-counter medications.</p> <p>The best advice is to choose one system, if possible.</p> <p>References: Definition 270-3(2)(k)</p>	<p><u>FACILITY STAFF</u></p> <p>The Consultant RN and Facility Administrator must agree on the facility policy for Medication Administration for all options in this column.</p> <p>Medications must be administered according to the Resident's Service Plan.</p> <p>R432-270-19 (2)(d) does not direct who is responsible to set-up medications.</p>	<p>The licensed health care professional delegates, in writing, the task of medication administration to trained facility staff. The delegation shall be in accordance with the Nurse Practice Act R58-31b-102 (10) (g)</p>	<p>Required</p> <p>Trained facility staff documents</p> <p>Reference 270-19(4)</p>

Note: This MEDICATION ADMINISTRATION GRID is for guidance only. Please refer to R432-270 for Assisted Living Facilities regulations.

Inservice on Medication Administration

Assisting residents with medications is an important and sometimes difficult job to do. If you do not give a resident their medication, or give them the wrong medication, you could be causing them harm. Here are some steps to take to ensure you are correctly giving meds. Always follow the 5 Rights:

1. The Right Patient- make sure you are giving Mrs. M's meds to Mrs. M.
2. The Right Medication- check the medication to make sure you are giving Tylenol, and not Tylenol PM.
3. The Right Time- Medications must be given within 30 min of time on the package or med box.
4. The Right Dose- Check the package sent by pharmacy, does it contain what it says it does? When giving prns, make sure you give according to instructions, 2 tabs vs 1 tab.
5. The Right Route- You give medications orally, topically, and ophthalmic. (Mouth, skin, eyes). Make sure you are giving it the right way. Ex: don't put eardrops in eyes.

Please make sure residents are receiving their prescribed medications. Here are some basic rules for medication assistance:

1. Do Not handle the pills with your hands. Open the med box and pour the pills into the resident's hand.
2. Wash hands between residents if you touch them.
3. Acknowledge the resident by name, say "Hi Ernie, I have your pills for you this morning."
4. Give medications to one resident at a time.
5. If you have a question, or are unsure about a medication, ask the administrator. No question is a dumb one!
6. You should observe the resident take the medication. Sometimes people drop pills or put them in their pockets and forget to take them.
7. The Medications are to be kept within the sight of the aide at all times or locked up.
8. If a resident refuses to take their prescribed medication, that is their right, but you must document it and notify administrator or nurse.
9. All medications must be signed for when the medication is taken by the resident, not 2 hours, or 2 days after. You must sign out all narcotics and the narcotics must be counted at each shift change. No one leaves until narcotic count is correct and signed for. If the count is off at any time the administrator must be notified.
10. Most narcotics are PRN, meaning as needed. You may give a prescribed narcotic to a resident who asks for it. Usually the order will read Lortab 5 mg PO q 3-4 hrs prn. This means the resident may have one every 3-4 hours if he requests. You can not decide to give a narcotic or any other PRN medication just because you think they need it. They must be able to verbalize to you that they want it.

Name: _____ Date: _____

Medication Quiz

1. T or F You should always double-check that you are giving the right resident the right medication at the right time.
2. T or F If the resident wants to take their pills later, you can leave them on the table for them to take when they want.
3. T or F You may sign out all your medications at the end of your shift.
4. T or F Narcotic or PRN medication can be given to the resident whenever YOU feel they need it.
5. T or F Sometimes you must assist in giving a resident a medication that does not come in the med box.
6. T or F You may go to the store and buy a resident Tylenol if they give you the money and ask you to.
7. T or F If you make a mistake and give the wrong pills to the wrong resident, you shouldn't tell anyone because you'll get in trouble and might lose your job.
8. T or F We are all human and sometimes we make mistakes. If you tell someone right away about an error, they will most likely be able to prevent the resident from further harm.
9. T or F You must identify the resident and check the name on the med box to be sure you are giving the right person the right medications.
10. T or F If someone doesn't want spray in their nose, you may spray it into their mouth.
11. T or F You will follow the policies on medications carefully because you care about your residents and want them to receive the best care.
12. T or F It is the resident's right to refuse to take their medication. You should document the refusal and notify the administrator.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Medication Pass-Off

1. Aide washes hands between touching residents. Yes No
2. RN observes aide assist resident with oral medications. Yes No
3. RN observes aide assist resident with patch medications. Yes No
4. RN observes aide assist resident with nasal medications. Yes No
5. Aide correctly verbalizes procedure for assisting residents with PRN meds. Yes No
6. Aide demonstrates correct procedure for assisting resident with narcotic scheduled and prn medications. Yes No
7. Aide correctly verbalizes and uses the "5 rights" when assisting with all types of medications. Yes No.
8. Aide demonstrates good judgement when RN quizzes on sample scenarios. Yes No

Comments:

* I certify the above-named staff member is authorized to administer medications under my license according to the RN Delegation Clause of the Nurse Practice Act.

RN Signature _____ Date: _____

MEDICATION ASSISTANCE GUIDELINES: TEACHING PLAN

Lesson Overview

Time: One Hour

This lesson covers basic guidelines for assisting residents with their medications.

Learning Goals

At the end of this session, the learner will:

1. Understand the "Five Rights" of medication assistance.
2. Understand nine additional guidelines for medication assistance.
3. Realize the importance of correct medication assistance and be aware of state regulations.
4. Learn basic information about three common medicines.

Teaching Plan

Give each learner a copy of the corresponding Learner Guide.

Section 1: Perfection is the Goal

- 1) Ask the learners if any of them ever manage to be perfect at anything. You will probably receive negative responses. State, "Most of the time we don't have to be perfect, because the consequences of a mistake are small."
- 2) Explain that when we work in a setting that provides care for people, there are some things that require as much perfection as we can possibly achieve. One of these things is medication assistance, and it demands our utmost concentration and attention to detail.
- 3) Ask the learners to tell you a harmful consequence that might result from these situations:
 - a) Someone getting the wrong medication
 - b) Someone taking the wrong dosage
 - c) Someone taking a medicine at the wrong time

Mention that even one mistake is too many, since it can cause inconvenience, discomfort, sickness, or death.

Section 2: The Rules

1. Review the material in this section, adding definitions and information you have about specific rules in your state.
2. Allow for questions and discussion.

Section 3: The Five Rights & Nine Additional Guidelines

1. Ask the learners to do the activity "Medication Assistance Crossword," using the material in their Learner Guide. If you prefer, they may do the activity as a group.
2. Give a prize or recognition to the learner who completes the crossword first. Have learners share their answers and compare to the key.
3. If your facility uses an approved abbreviation list, provide it for the learners to review.
4. Emphasize that assisting with medications requires attention to detail. Remind the learners not to guess if they don't understand a dosage, a drug name, or an abbreviation. If something is not clear or doesn't match, they should always check with a supervisor.

Section 4: Common Medications

1. Encourage the learners to learn about medications they frequently assist with.
2. Review the material in the Learner Guide about the three common medications.

Conclusion

1. Tell the learners they must always listen carefully to anything the residents say about their medications, and pass this information along to a supervisor.
2. Ask learners to do the Medication Assistance Matching activity as the review test. Compare answers with your key. Give Certificates.

MEDICATION ASSISTANCE GUIDELINES: LEARNER GUIDE

100% Perfection is the Goal!

Assisting your residents with their medications is one of the most important things you may do in a care facility. A lot of harm can result when medications are taken improperly, when the wrong drug is taken, or when a resident doesn't get the right medicine at the right time. The harm may be as simple as some inconvenient rescheduling, or as drastic as sickness and death. When you help a resident with medicines, you are responsible for being sure that the medicines are taken correctly. Always strive for perfection in this area, because even one error is too many.

The Rules

The laws and rules about how much medication assistance an unlicensed worker may give to a resident vary from state to state. Your administrator or director is responsible for making sure each direct care worker knows what those rules are. Your facility's policies probably include these rules in their operating procedures.

In most states there is a difference between medication administration and medication assistance. Ask your supervisor about the differences in your state. Usually only licensed nurses and medication aides are allowed to administer medications in a facility. It does not require any special license in most states to assist residents of a facility with their medications.

Two important rules that are currently correct in the majority of states:

1. Only licensed medical professionals such as nurses may administer injections into a muscle (intramuscular or IM injections).
2. Only licensed medical professionals may administer injections into a vein (intravenous or IV injections). This includes maintaining an intravenous line such as a heparin lock, or injecting anything into a central venous line or port.

However, it is sometimes permissible to assist a resident with the above procedures, depending on the rules in your state. Your facility policies and supervisor will guide you.

The Five Rights

There are five important rules to remember when providing medication assistance.

1. **Right Resident**—Read the resident's name out loud, checking to be sure that the medication paperwork and the medication container match, before you hand any medications to a resident. Even when you know the residents well, it is good practice to say, "Mrs. Smith, here are the medicines you take at this time." Follow your facility's policies for using resident pictures or identifiers.
2. **Right Drug**—Compare the name of the drug on the medicine container to the name of the drug on the medication paperwork and be sure the names are the same before assisting the resident with that medication.
3. **Right Dose**—Look at the dosage on the medication container and be sure it is identical to the dosage written on the medication paperwork. Be very exact about details. Be sure the resident takes the right number of pills and the correct amount of liquid med.
4. **Right Time**—This includes the date, day of the week, and time of day. All three must be the same on the medication paperwork and the medication container, and must match the

Nine Additional Guidelines for Assisting with Medications:

1. Check the expiration date on medications your residents are taking. Old medicines should be discarded or sent back to the pharmacy. This includes nonprescription drugs and vitamins. Taking medicines after their expiration date can be harmful.
2. Some medicines are supposed to be taken with food; others should be taken on an empty stomach. Be aware of instructions about when and how medications should be taken.
3. Whenever possible, medication should not be stored in bathroom medicine cabinets, because heat and humidity can harm the drug. Medicines should be kept in a cool, dry place. Some medicines must be refrigerated.
4. Try to perform medication assistance in good light and with a minimum of distractions. Errors often occur because of interruptions and haste.
5. If you make an error, report it to your supervisor immediately! Many errors will not have serious consequences if medical personnel can respond soon.
6. Documentation of medication assistance must follow correct procedures and be clear and accurate.
7. If your facility uses abbreviations, be sure you know what they mean.
8. Drug names can be very confusing. All medicines have a scientific or chemical name, called the generic name, and a brand name from the manufacturer. Whichever name is used to identify a medicine, the same name must appear on the medicine container and on any paperwork or labels you use to help with your medication assistance. If you find names that are not the same, clarify them with your supervisor.
9. Wash your hands before assisting with medication!

Common Medications

Everyone should learn a little about some of the medicines that a lot of people take.

Furosemide: a diuretic, sometimes called a water pill. It helps the kidneys pull more water out of the body and eliminate it in urine. It causes people to urinate more often. It is often given to people with congestive heart failure because they tend to accumulate excess fluid in their bodies. Some people find this drug causes stomach upset, which can be relieved if they take the medicine with food or milk. Most people prefer to take this medication early in the day to avoid frequent nighttime trips to the bathroom.

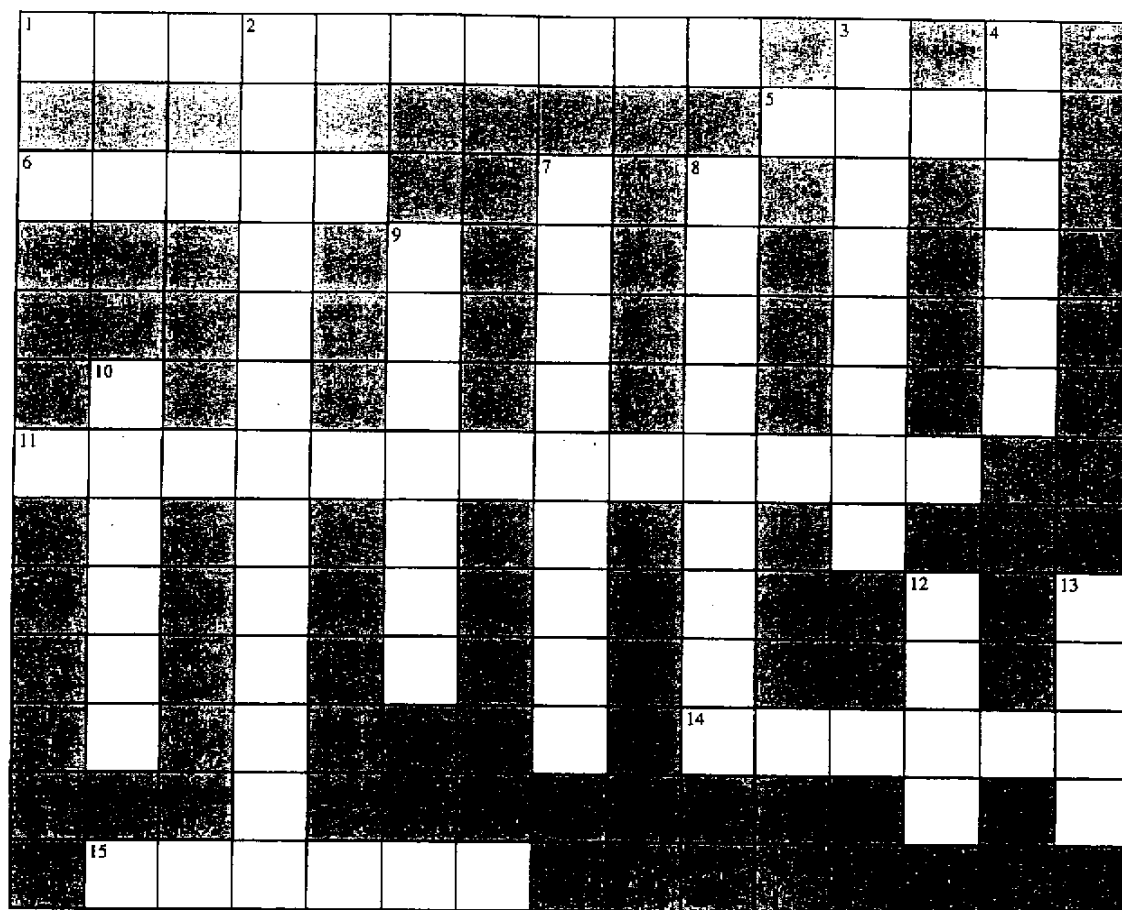
Potassium chloride: the mineral potassium, often given when someone is taking a diuretic like furosemide. Residents who take diuretics (water pills) lose potassium along with the excess water they lose, and they may not get enough potassium in their food. This drug should be taken with a full glass of liquid when possible. It is measured in milliequivalents, which some people confuse with milligrams because the abbreviations look similar (mEq, mg).

Digoxin: this drug causes the heart to work more efficiently and helps to control irregular heartbeats. Sometimes it can slow the heart too much, which is why many facilities require you to check the resident's pulse before giving digoxin. If the pulse is less than sixty beats per minute, you should notify your supervisor before giving the drug. Someone may need to report this finding to the resident's doctor before the dose of digoxin is taken. Sometimes if you check the pulse again in thirty minutes or an hour, it will be sixty or above and the resident can safely take the digoxin.

Remember:

Always listen to your residents when they tell you something about their medicines. Be sure that any complaints, changes, or statements that something is wrong about their medicines or their health are told immediately to your supervisor.

MEDICATION ASSISTANCE CROSSWORD



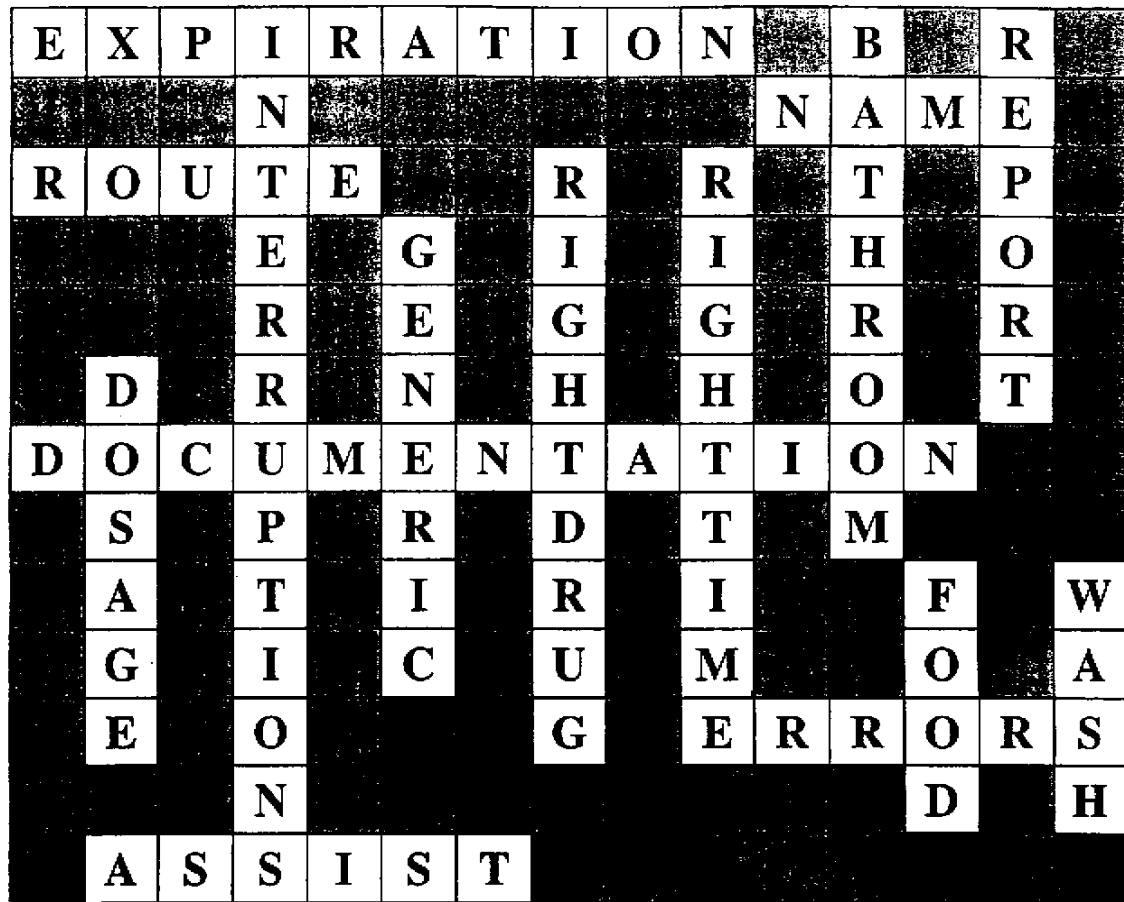
Across

1. Check this date to see if the drug is too old to use
5. Say this aloud to be sure you have the right resident
6. The way a medicine is taken
11. Must be clear and accurate
14. You want to try to have none of these in your medication assistance work
15. Only properly licensed workers may administer medications, but unlicensed helpers may do this in some settings

Down

2. Can cause mistakes to occur
3. Not a good place for storing medications
4. What to do if you make an error
7. The name of the drug is correct and matches on all paperwork and containers
8. The right date, day of the week, and time of day
9. The chemical or scientific name of a drug
10. The "Right Dose" means this must be correct
12. Some medicines must be taken with this
13. Do this to your hands before assisting with medications

MEDICATION ASSISTANCE CROSSWORD ANSWER KEY



Across

1. Check this date to see if the drug is too old to use
5. Say this aloud to be sure you have the right resident
6. The way a medicine is taken
11. Must be clear and accurate
14. You want to try to have none of these in your medication assistance work
15. Only properly licensed workers may administer medications, but unlicensed helpers may do this in some settings

Down

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MEDICATION ASSISTANCE MATCHING TEST

Match the description or definition to the phrases in the list below. Write the correct letter beside the phrases.

Number correct: _____ (12 correct answers required to pass)

1. A mineral (KCL) _____
 2. Correct amount of drug _____
 3. Cause errors _____
 4. Correct day, date, and time _____
 5. Digoxin _____
 6. Good light _____
 7. Increases urine _____
 8. Medication instructions _____
 9. Listen to them _____
 10. Perfection _____
 11. Report them _____
 12. Right Drug _____
 13. Right Route _____
 14. Right Resident _____
 15. Wash hands _____
-
- a. By mouth, under the tongue, injected, inhaled, or applied to the skin
 - b. Do this before assisting with medications
 - c. Match the resident's name with the paperwork and the name on the drug container
 - d. Best condition for medication assistance
 - e. Some medicines are taken with food, others without
 - f. What you should do about errors
 - g. Correct medication name matching on paperwork and container
 - h. The Goal of Medication Assistance
 - i. Remember to do this to your residents when assisting with medications
 - j. A water pill or diuretic
 - k. Interruptions and haste
 - l. It is good to be sure the pulse isn't too slow before using this medicine
 - m. Right Time
 - n. Right Dosage
 - o. Potassium chloride

MEDICATION ASSISTANCE MATCHING: ANSWER KEY

Match the description or definition to the phrases in the list below. Write the correct letter beside the phrases.

Number correct: _____ (12 correct answers required to pass)

1. A mineral (KCL) ____o____
 2. Correct amount of drug ____n____
 3. Cause errors ____k____
 4. Correct day, date, and time ____m____
 5. Digoxin ____l____
 6. Good light ____d____
 7. Increases urine ____j____
 8. Medication instructions ____e____
 9. Listen to them ____i____
 10. Perfection ____h____
 11. Report them ____f____
 12. Right Drug ____g____
 13. Right Route ____a____
 14. Right Resident ____c____
 15. Wash hands ____b____
-
- a. By mouth, under the tongue, injected, inhaled, or applied to the skin
 - b. Do this before assisting with medications
 - c. Match the resident's name with the paperwork and the name on the drug container
 - d. Best condition for medication assistance
 - e. Some medicines are taken with food, others without
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Certificate of Achievement

Awarded to: _____

For Completing the One-Hour Course Entitled
"Medication Assistance Guidelines"

Date of Course: _____

Presented by: _____

(Presenter's name, or write "self-study")

Facility Name: _____